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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3678th meeting of the Security Council, held on 3 July 1996 in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Croatia", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council, in accordance with paragraph 6 of resolution 1037 (1995), has considered the report of the Secretary-General of 26 June 1996 (S/1996/472) submitted pursuant to this resolution on the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES).

"The Security Council notes that the implementation of the Basic Agreement on the Region of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (S/1995/951, annex), signed on 12 November 1995 (the Basic Agreement), is proceeding according to the timetable established by this Agreement. In particular it notes with appreciation that the demilitarization proceeded smoothly and was completed on 20 June 1996. It expresses its satisfaction at the cooperation that both parties have shown in this respect. It calls upon both sides to refrain from any action that might raise tension and to continue to cooperate closely with UNTAES on all aspects of the Basic Agreement to maintain peace and security in the Region. It expresses its readiness to consider favourably the extension of the mandate of the United Nations military observers in UNTAES as recommended in the report.

"The Security Council expresses its satisfaction with the work already achieved by UNTAES, in particular through its operational joint implementation committees, for the re-establishment of normal conditions of life for all the inhabitants of the Region. The Council welcomes the efforts now in train to begin the return of displaced persons and refugees to their homes in the Region. It notes that it is equally important that persons who fled from their homes in Western Slavonia and elsewhere in Croatia, in particular in the Krajina, should be permitted to return to their homes of origin. The Council calls upon both parties to cooperate fully with UNTAES in that respect.

"The Security Council recalls the statement of its President of 22 May 1996 (S/PRST/1996/26). The Council regrets that the Government of the Republic of Croatia has not yet taken steps to adopt a comprehensive amnesty law concerning all persons who, either voluntarily or by coercion, served in the civil administration, military or police forces of the local Serb authorities in the former United Nations Protected Areas, with the exception of those who committed war crimes as defined in international law. The Council urges that this action should be taken as soon as possible and calls on the Croatian Government to cooperate with UNTAES to that end.

"The Security Council expresses its concern at the worsening economic situation in the Region, particularly since the closure in April of the Djeletovci oilfields, which constitute the Region's most important economic resource, and at the subsequent lack of revenue available to the local administration to meet salaries and other operating costs of the Region. The Council urges the Government of the Republic of Croatia to cooperate closely with UNTAES to identify and provide funding for the local administration and public services. It also underlines the importance of economic development in stabilizing the Region.

"The Security Council expresses its support for the efforts of UNTAES to establish and train a Transitional Police Force which will have the primary responsibility for the maintenance of law and order, operating under the authority of the Transitional Administrator and monitored by the United Nations civilian police. The Council also supports the efforts of UNTAES and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to facilitate mine clearing for humanitarian purposes. It calls upon States and others concerned urgently to contribute in support of such activities.

"The Security Council commends the Transitional Administrator and all the personnel of UNTAES for the impressive results they have achieved so far and expresses its full support for them.

"The Security Council will remain seized of the matter."

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